BARTO

The mountain of Venus in the Tannhäuser legend

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THE MOUNTAIN OF VENUS IN THE TANNHÄUSER LEGEND

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BY

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A. B. University of Illinois, 1906

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN GERMAN

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1910

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 2 1910

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Philip Stephan Barto

ENTITLED The Mountain of Venus in the Tannhäuser Legend

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts

Julius Goebel
In Charge of Major Work

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Recommendation concurred in:

Committee
on
Final Examination

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THE HOME BOOK OF
MARX'S ENTIRE ECONOMIC
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THE MOUNTAIN OF VENUS IN THE TANNHÄUSER LEGEND.

INTRODUCTION.

So closely is the legend of the mountain of Venus bound up with that of Tannhäuser in German literature of the middle ages that mention of either brings the other at once to mind. The beautiful volkslied of Tannhäuser gives us, as it were, in crystallized form the whole story and opens to us a field broad enough for almost endless inquiry and investigation. In taking up the question of the Venusberg in the Tannhäuser story, therefore, it is my purpose for the present to confine myself to a consideration of the origin of the mountain of Venus legend itself. Should I succeed in establishing a definite conclusion on this point, I shall have at least made sure of the first important step in the solution of the whole problem.

The question of the Venusberg presents many intricacies and has been often considered from various points of view, but no definite and satisfactory explanation seems yet to have been reached. If in the following discussion an unusual, and, at first sight, improbable point of view is assumed from the outset the reader is asked to reserve judgment until the whole of the tale is told.

The legend of the Venusberg is briefly this. Within a hollow mountain lives Venus, surrounded by every sort of luxury and accompanied by many beautiful women. At various times travellers chance to find the passage into the mountain or are actually enticed in by Venus herself. There they enter upon a life of sensual pleasure which lasts until the day of doom, when they are all

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to be eternally damned. In most versions of the legend two or three periods of time, at the expiration of any one of which each traveller may depart, are provided for. But once the last of the three periods has been exceeded there is no return. Different versions tell of different historical and mythical personages supposed to be in such a mountain, chief among them for our purpose Tannhäuser. The trusty Eckart stands at the entrance in later accounts and warns all comers of the dangers within. Some tell how Venus and her women once each week leave their lovers and, going to an inner room, there become snakes and vermin, the next day to appear more beautiful than ever. 1)

At present there exist two general theories as to the origin and probable localization of what was known in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries as the mountain of Venus. One assumes that it was in Germany where the story originated and that it attached itself to various mountains there, particularly in Schwabia and Thuringia. The Hörselberg in Thuringia has been especially exploited as the seat of the legend and an excellent account of this version of the legend is given by Grässe in a pamphlet published in the '60's. 2) Still another theory whose chief modern exponent is Gaston Paris assumes that the myth had its origin in Italy or islands of the Mediterranean, and thence travelled into Germany.

The story had wide circulation in the centuries previously mentioned, frequent references being made to it in literature of that period. Previous to the 14th and after the 16th centuries, however, we find no literary mention of it. Even such a man as

1) "Bunte Blätter", Friedrich Kluge, 'Venusberg', p. 40.
2) "Tannhäuser und Ewige Jude", J.G.Th. Grässe.

the polyhistor Zedler in his huge encyclopedia of the 18th century does not know anything of a Venusberg in the sense in which we are here considering it.1)Where the story really started and what it really is becomes, therefore, an interesting question. It is my conviction that any attempt to attribute the beginnings of the legend to the peculiar formation or tradition of some actual mountain is based on a wrong premise and can never lead to any satisfactory conclusions. Inasmuch as I purpose linking it with a matter seemingly so remote as to make the attempt appear startling, I shall at once state my thesis in order that there may be no doubt even from the start as to the point I wish to establish.

The legend of the Venusberg is nothing more nor less that an outgrowth of the legend of the Holy Grail.

1) "Encyclopedia", v. 1 - 34, Johann Friedrich Zedler.

THE GRAIL.

A great mass of material, much of it fanciful and speculative has been written on the origin of the grail legend in the West. Some few investigators have touched the matter to the quick, but at widely separated points and as yet with no thought of such a connection of their respective discoveries as would result in a full and logical explanation of the whole question. Such a connection of facts which at present are left more or less isolated will help to clear up some of the present confusion in this chapter of the history of the grail legend.

The story of the Holy Grail first appears in literature of the West in the 12th century. Chrestien de Troyes gives us the first literary account. (1190) Where Chrestien got his inspiration for such a work we cannot be certain. We are told of a book given him by his patron prince whose father had brought from the East blood of Christ. Hertz speaks as follows of this matter: "Dieser (Chrestien) schöpfte aus einem Buche, das er vom Grafen von Flandern, Philipp von Elsass, spätestens im Jahre 1189 erhielt. - - - Dietrich von Elsass, Graf von Flandern, der Vater jenes Grafen Philipp, von dem Chrestien das ihm zur Quelle dienende Gralbuch erhielt, brachte aus dem dritten Kreuzzug als Ehrengabe des Patriarchen von Jerusalem Blut Christi mit, das Joseph von Arimathia und Nikodemus vom Leichnam des Herrn mit einem Schwämme abgewaschen hatten. Die Reliquie kam in die Kapelle des h. Basilius zu Brugge"1) Chrestien may, therefore, have been prompted somewhat by feelings of regard for his patron in conceiving such a

1)"Parzival", Hertz, pp. 414, 415 & 455; Martonne, Memoires et dissertations sur les Antiquites, XVIII, 77.

theme.

After Chrestien follow many others down to recent times. Robert von Boron in his grail romance (1180 - 1200), Wolfram von Eschenbach in his Parzival, Malory in his Morte DArthur, and other writers during medieval and modern times as far as Tennyson and Wagner all give the same legend in differing form. The date of its first appearance in western literature is important, as we shall later show. Whence the legend came into the West in the first place has been much discussed for many years and with no very satisfying results. A recent investigation by Konrad Burdach seems,however, to be so conclusive as quite to overshadow all previous theorizing with something which looks like substantial fact. Previous to Burdach two general theories on this point were held. The first was that it was a Christianized relic of a pre-Christian or pagan rite, perhaps connected with the return of spring 1) or druidic worship 2) and of Celtic origin. The second, that it was developed from the legend of Joseph of Arimathia and Nicodemus 3).

In an address given in 1903 Burdach gave a brief outline of his conclusions, which it was his purpose to develop more fully and completely in book form later. The report of the address appeared in the Deutsche Literaturzeitung for that year and it is on this that all the references in this paper to Burdach's theory are based. 4) The book has not yet appeared, although it is awaited

1) cf. "Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail", Alfred Nutt.
2) cf. "Das Kloster", Scheible, v. 9, p. 647 ff.
3) cf. "Parzival", Hertz, p. 421 ff.
4) "Deutsche Literaturzeitung" , 1903, Nr. 46, p. 2821 ff.

with much expectation by those interested in the subject. Burdach accepts neither of the explanations just mentioned. He admits that the legend in the West is of purely Christian origin, but assigns it to quite a different quarter than Joseph of Arimathia. The spear he places as of equal importance with the cup and as of equal antiquity. He describes at some length the materialistic rites of the Eastern or Greek church, shows in what essentials it differs from the Western, gives explanations of the symbolism of the ritual,all going to show the emphasis laid on mysteries of cult in that branch of the Catholic Church, and gives his conclusion that here is to be found the source of the western legend.

The legend of the lance, he says, goes hand in hand with that of the grail from the start. The account in John 19,- 34 of the blood and water from the side of Jesus is symbolic and mystical. The blood and water are symbols of sacrifice and atonement, of new life, rebirth, purity and the glory of paradise. In Amos 7,- 14 there is a reference to the mystic resurrection of Christ corresponding to the spear-thrust, where Amos speaks of plucking the sycamore; blood and water ran from Jesus' side as sap from a fresh sycamore; as the fruit of the sycamore is eatable in three days so Jesus lives three days in the tomb. Kelsos from 177 to 180 travestied John's account of the spear-thrust with the Homeric sap of the gods, Ichor, which flowed from the wounded Venus after the thrust of Diomedes. Tertullian taught the East dogma, amongst it a figure of double baptism with water and blood, and in the spear-wound the opening of the side of the second Adam whence sprang the

second Eve, that is, the Church. Neither Cyprian, Augustine nor Leo the Great nor older dogmatists of the East give a direct connection of the spear-thrust and the evening meal. Likewise it is not in the oldest Roman Liturgy, the Sacramentarium Gelasianum. The lance miracle appears for the first time bound with the sacramental treatment of the last supper in the gnostic writings of Pistis Sophia of the third century. Here it belongs to the third potency in the ascending eucharistic sacrifice of bread, wine and water in the secret worship into which Jesus initiated his disciples after the resurrection. The Doctor Eucharistiae, John Chrysostom, towards the end of the fourth century placed the miracle of the spear in the centre of his grossly materialistic phantasmagoria of the Eucharist, whose vital part is for him the effect of immortality, corresponding to the Pharmachon anathanasias of Ignatius. For him the last supper was a dramatic allegory having for its object the theurgic effect on the uninitiated to whom it gives paradise on earth. During the fifth and sixth centuries there arose at Jerusalem in the centre of the pilgrimages to Palestine the foundation of the fabulous representation of the grail and grail temple in the worship of the onyx cup of the last supper and the holy lance. This worship was in the Church of the Grave. The oldest pictures of the eucharistic cup are in the floor mosaic at Madeba in Palestine, dating back to the fifth century, and in the Melchisedik mosaic in San Vitale and Sant Apollinare, at Ravena. These mosaics show the cup in two forms,- as a drinking vessel and as a plate on one foot with or without handle, at times quite flat. This explains what some have chosen to

regard as artistic development,- namely that the cup appears in accounts now as a cup, now as a flat vessel. The holy lance after the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 674 went to Constantinople. Later it multiplied and was worshipped at both places and puts in appearance in Antioch. Since then it has been the palladium of the ideal of chivalry. The collective tradition of the grail legend must have arisen in the grail procession of the Byzantine Mass. In the only peculiar feature of this Mass whose cult Chrysostom knew, is an allegorical drama of the spear-miracle and the blood and water. In the Great Entrance of the Mass (Eisodos megale) the cup (the grail) amid burning candles and lamps is carried in; by the deacon, the diskus, the table-like patena of the Greek rite; by others,the holy lance and other relics. From Easter to Ascension there is carried besides these a figure of Christ, perhaps symbolizing his three days abode in the tomb. After this pomp, which reminds us of antique mysteries,comes the burial, in which Joseph of Arimathia is actively represented. At the close of the Byzantine Mass after the host is broken the secret of the life-giving power of the spear-miracle is recalled by pouring warm water into the cup as a symbol of the return of warmth to the blood and of the resurrection to immortality. These pictures and rites,whose reflex is seen in the grail legend, penetrated the consciousness of the Occident. Through art, song, liturgy, dogma, legend, and superstition it spread, and in the 12th century finally appeared in literary form.

Such is Burdach's account. His conclusion is that crusaders to the East, attending church and beholding all this gourgeous

ceremonial of the Byzantine Mass were so impressed by its crowning glory, the Great Entrance, in which appeared the Holy Gifts, that they brought back a tradition of the cup and spear to the western world and thus the legend of the cup and bleeding spear began.

Inasmuch as Burdach's book has not yet appeared and his full and detailed exposition is not at hand, it has seemed necessary to bring to bear some facts not found in the brief account from which I have quoted, in order to make certain of my ground. Were the book itself in print what I bring forth on the subject would seem at best only fragmentary, but I believe it to be sound.

In the liturgy now used by the Graeco-Russian Church, which is a direct descendant of the Greek Church since about 992, we find certain facts which bear Burdach out point by point in what he has said of the Byzantine Mass and fill in gaps which the brief account at hand has unavoidably left. My authority here is a translation of the liturgy of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Graeco-Russian Church from the old Slavonic Service Books by P. Kuvochinsky. It must be borne in mind that these are the liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and Basil the Great and that they have in all probability been preserved with that care for detail of form which characterizes the Catholic Church east and west. From this liturgy with the commentary by the translator, who writes in a tone which tells us he is one of the faithful, I have taken the following points as significant, and will give them in substance as a basis for further comment.

Of special sacred vessels not in use in the Western Church there are five,- the Asterisk, Air, Sacramental Fans, Spoon and

Spear. With the spear the Altar Breads or Holy Body is pierced. The Asterisk consists of two large,thin plates of silver, forming an arch. It supports the veil so that it may not touch the Holy Gifts. Its mystical meaning is the Star of the Wise Men. All persons, children and adults, partake of the communion by means of the Sacred Spoon. The Air is a large linen cloth covering the Paten and Chalice. As air surrounds the earth so it surrounds the Holy Gifts. The Sacramental Fans represent the six-winged cherubim and are used to keep flies off the Holy Elements. Although for our discussion the spear alone of all these is important, I give them all as showing the fulness and detail of the ceremonial of the eastern church, and the general impressiveness which it must have had not only on those accustomed to it but especially upon strangers. There are three veils used in the eucharistic ceremony. They are made of damask, velvet, or cloth of gold, embroidered and ornamented in various ways. The Great Entrance, the carrying of the Elements from the Prothesis (or Table of Oblation) to the Altar, is the most imposing ceremony in the Russian Church. It symbolizes the last advent of Christ when he shall come with glory. First comes the Reader bearing a high candlestick with lighted candle; after this follow the Deacon or Deacons in order symbolising the rank of angels. Then come those who bear the Holy Gifts. If there be more than one present each of the rest holds a sacred object,- the cross, the spoon, the spear. The veil is kept over the Holy Gifts until the creed is finished in token that we must make a true confession about our Lord before we can behold Him without any veil. At the final

preparation of the Eucharist for the communion and the reception of the clergy the curtain is drawn over the Holy Door, to call to remembrance the burial of Christ and His sojourn in the tomb. The elevation of the Bread sets forth to us the elevation of Jesus on the cross. When the priest breaks the Holy Bread into four pieces and taking the upper portion places it in the chalice it is symbolical of the union of the Body and Blood of Christ. The addition of warm water to the chalice signifies the returning to life of His most pure Body at his Divine Resurrection. St. Germanus explains as follows; 'As blood and warm water flowed both of them from the side of Christ, thus hot water poured into the chalice at the time of consecration gives a full type of the mystery to those who draw that holy liquid from the chalice, as from the life-giving side of our Lord.' At the communion of the congregation the Holy Door is opened, typical of the miraculous opening of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Deacor, holding the Cup in his two hands on a level with his face, invites the people to approach. 1)

In the Liturgy of the Faithful, amid song by the Choir, occurs the Great Entrance. Farther on in the same liturgy the following direction is given; 'Then taking the Paten he (the Priest) shall place it reverently on the head of the Deacon, who still holdeth the Censer, and the Priest shall take in his hand the Chalice and they shall go forth through the North Door, preceded by a taper.' Farther on, 'The Deacon again: 'Bless Master the Holy Cup! The Priest blessing it says, 'And that which is in the Holy Cup, the precious Blood of thy Christ.' Again: 'And he shall

1) "The Russian Liturgy", pp. i - xxiii.

cover the Cup with the Veil(of damask, velvet, or cloth of gold) and the Holy Paten with the Star, Cover and Veil - - -Then the Holy Door is opened and the Deacon, making a reverence shall stand at the entrance and taking from the Priest the Cup, and elevating it shall say: - - -Then shall the Priest set the Cup upon the altar and bless the people: - - - The Priest taking the Holy Paten shall set it upon the head of the Deacon and the Deacon going to the place of ablution shall set it therein. The Priest having done reverence shall take the Holy Cup, and looking upon the people shall say - - - 'Let us depart in Peace' ".

In this account we find cup, patena and spear. We also find veil of damask, velvet or cloth of gold, which reminds us strongly of the cloth of samite which we encounter in the grail legend. We can also see at the Great Entrance how the cup enters covered with the rich veil, passes about, is briefly uncovered, and later departs again covered, all quite similar to the legendary entrance of the Holy Grail into the hall where it is covered because of its overpowering splendor. It is a mysterious vessel enough even in the actual Greek mass. The especial emphasis on the sacredness of the cup itself, quite separated from its contents, is significant. "Bless, Master, the Holy Cup." "And the Holy Blood within the Cup." This hints at the sacred onyx cup of earlier days in Jerusalem, the alleged cup of our Lord. The evidence on the whole fits well with Burdach's explanation as to the origin of the grail legend in the West, namely that its first appearance in the 13th century and its growing popularity is connected directly with the crusades, which also began in the 12th century, and is traceable

through them to the imposing Great Entrance of the Byzantine Mass, which the crusaders must often have witnessed.

If such is the origin of the grail legend in the West, we may properly pass to the consideration of its further development there,- a consideration of even greater importance for our purpose. The reception which the legend seems to have met with is not what we should expect on the face of the situation. A story having to do with so sacred a relic and of such clearly Christian origin might fairly be supposed to be popular with both common people and clergy. But such seems not to have been the case at all. After a considerable period of silence concerning the legend except in the important literary productions of Chrestien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach,- productions which must have done much to make the story reasonably well-known - we find our Holy Grail coming to light in a strange and grotesquely altered form. In North Germany we learn that the word itself meant a carousal, a place of sensual pleasure, the summum bonum of human joy in no very high sense, and that it really meant nothing else to these people. We shall do well to remember that this part of the country is comparatively removed from Chrestien and Wolfram. Grimm's Wörterbuch takes up this phase of the subject under'Krales' and proceeds as follows: 'ein fest, schmaus u.a., im 16. jahrh. 1)das subst. 'die frau hielt einen Krales nach dem andern';'gehet der man fornen naus so gehet sie hinden naus zum Krales fur die Wochen zum spieskuchens'; 'Kindermegdlein, wenn sie auf die Kirchmessen laufen und Krales haben das seind auch(später) böse kindermutter'; auch im plural, 'viel Krales, panket und gastieren halten bringet

manchen in grosse Schuld'; 'öffentliche quas und crales'; 'geistliche schlampamp und kirchencrales'. 5)dazu ein zeitwort 'kralesieren, kralisieren. 'der leute datum stund auf guter schnabelweide - - - pankatiert und kralisiert haven die leut.'

3) es muss aus Niederdeutschland gekommen sein. dort hiess gral m. ein fest, wie es z.b. die Magdeburger schöppenchronik 1280 als in Magdeburg gefeiert schildert.

4)aber es steckt nichts dahinter als der wunderbare sagenhafte gral, der durch die gedichte vom Parzival und Titurel gemeingut der gedanken geworden war. denn bei jenem feste, z.b. in Magdeburg, bildete den Mittelpunkt ein auf einer Elbeninsel errichtetes bau, der gral , in dem helden hausten und zum kampfe daraus hervor kamen, eine darstellung des graltempels gedacht als inbegriff aller herlichkeit; der name des kleinods ging dabei auf das gebäude über, das ihm diente. eigen bei Fischart,'den Grall oder Venusberg besuchen', in Italien gedacht. man hatte dort,z.b. in Neapel, ein fest, wo ein künstlicher berg ezwaaren ausspie, cuccagna genannt, das ital. schlaraffenland. (Diez. etym. wb. 1, 147)

In his Middle High German Dictionary, Lexer gives as a definition of the word the following: ' bildlich, das teurste, liebste; ritterspiel der bürger in nd. städten, s. nd. Aesopus, hrs. v. Hoffmann s. 40! He then cites a passage which he says has been overlooked. The passage is from the 'De Schismate' of Dietrich a Niem, 1410; 'ad quattuor milaria (bei Puteoli) cernitur mons sanctae Barbarae in plano campo eminens et rotundus, quem delusi multi Alemani in vulgari appellant der Gral, asserentes prout etiam

in illis regionibus plerique autumant, quod in illo multi sunt homines vivi et victuri usque ad diem iudicii, qui tripudiis et deliciis sunt dediti, et ludibriis diaboliciis perpetuo irretiti.'

In the literature of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries we find 'gral' used in connections which make it synonymous with earthly bliss, not only in the North but throughout Germany. In Oswald von Wolkenstein who writes from the Tirol we find the following (1377 - 1445):- "ich hoff, du last mich nicht allain, seit du nu pist mein höchster gral, der alles laid verdecket." 1)

The celebration to which Grimm makes reference in the Wörterbuch is more fully described in the Magdeburg Schöppenchronik:

"1281. In dussen tiden weren hir noch kunstabelen, dat weren der rikesten borger kinder; de plegen dat spel vor to stande in den pingsten, als den Roland, den schildekenbom, tabelrunde und ander spel, dat nu de ratman sulven vorstan in dem vorgeschreven stride was ein kunstabel, der heit Brun von Sconenbeke, dat was ein gelart man den beden sine gesellen, de kunstabelen, dat he on dichte und bedechte ein vreidig spel. des makede he ein gral und dichte hovesche breve. de sande he to Goslar, to Hildesheim und to Brunswik, Quedlingeborch, Halberstad und to anderen steden und ladeten to sik alle koplude, die dar ridderschap wolden oven, dat se to on quemen,to Magdeborch, se hedden eine schone vruwen, de heit vrow Feie (Sophie) de scholde men geven den, der se vorwerven kunde mit tuchten und manheit. dar van worden bewegen alle jungelinge in den steden. de van Goslar kemen mit vordeckeden rossen. de van Brunswic kemen alle mit gronen verdecket und ge-

1) "Oswald von Wolkenstein", J.Schatz, Nr. 11.

cleidet, und andere stede hedden ok or sunderlike wapene und varwe. do se vor disse stad quemen, se wolden nicht inriden, men entpfeng se mit suste (Tjost) und dustiren. dat geschach. twe kunstabelen togen ut und bestanden de und entpfengen se mit den speren. de wile was de grale bereit up dem mersche und vele telt und pawelune up dem mersche, dar hangeden de kunstabelen schilde an, de in dem grale weren. des anderen dages, do de gesten missen hadden gehort und gegeten, se togen vor den gral und beschauweden den. dar wart on verlovet, dat malk rorde einen schilt welkes jungelinges de schilt were, de queme her vor und bestunde den rorer. dat geschach an allen. to lesten vordeinde vrowen Feien ein olt kopman van Goslere; de vorde se mit sik und gaf se to der e und gaf or so vele mede, dat se ores wilden levendes nicht mer ovede. hir van ist ein ganz dudesch gok gemaket. de sulve Brun Sconenbeke makede sedder vele dudesche boke, als Cantica Canticorum, dat Ave Maria und vele gudes gedichtes." 1)

What then has befallen the initial conception of the grail becomes a matter of interest and one requiring some explanation. We may set it down at the outset as a safe assumption that had the Church of Rome which at this time so completely dominated western thought taken up and sanctioned the legend of the Holy Grail it would have been but little likely to have undergone in so short time such a fate. Holy things, especially relics, do not among catholics become objects for profane treatment without protest from the church. We may assume that the legend was at least not fostered by the clergy. It may be that we are justified in

1) "Das Höfische Leben". Schulz, Ed. 2, v. 2, pp. 117. 118.

assuming something further. We are told on the authority of a writer in the Catholic Encyclopedia, a very recent work, that with the exception of Helinandus no church father or clerical writer makes any mention of the grail,(and Helinandus has only the following to say: 'gradalis sive gradale gallice dicitur scutella lata et aliquantulum profunda, in qua pretiose dapes suo jure divitibus solent apponi gradatim unus morsellus post alium in diversis ordinibus, et dicitur vulgari nomine graalz' 1).
A search of my own in the Patrologiae from the year 1100 to the end of the work in about 1215 shows no reference to the matter. This silence is noteworthy even though it may be only a piece of negative evidence. In the Catholic Encyclopedia the author of the article on 'grail' above referred to concludes with this interesting paragraph. 2)

"It would seem that a legend so distinctively Christian would find favor with the Church. Yet this was not the case. Excepting Helinandus clerical writers do not mention the Grail and the Church ignored the legend completely. After all the legend contained elements of which the Church could not approve. Its sources are in apocryphal not in canonical scripture and the claims of sanctity made for the Grail were refuted by their very extravagance. Moreover the legend claimed for the church in Britain an origin well-nigh as illustrious as that of the Church of Rome and independent of Rome etc."

In connection with the idea expressed in the last sentence of this paragraph ten Brink speaks in his'Englische Literatur' as follows: "Dem ganzen(the grail) scheint die Idee einer mystischen

1) Mitthd. Wb., Lexer,'Gral' 2) Cath. Encyc., v. 6, 'Grail'.

Kirche neben der sichtbaren und officielen zu Grunde zu liegen, einer Kirche, die dann freilich ihre eigenen Apostel und Diener hat. In wiefern dogmatische Ansichten gewisser Secten jener Zeit hineinspielen, wäre interessant zu untersuchen. In England, wo sich unter Heinrich II die Tendenzen nach kirchlicher Selbstständigkeit erneuerten, fand diese Legende einen fruchtbaren Boden. Man benutzte sie dazu, der englischen Kirche eine von Rom unabhängige Ursprung zu geben." 1)

The importance of the passage from the Catholic Encyclopedia lies not so much in the reasons which the writer gives as in the fact that (1) he writes under the 'imprimatur' of the Roman Catholic Church, and (2) he seems to be echoing a tradition of his church. The tradition seems to be there to-day and to have been there in times past, which is the important thing for this consideration. This tradition of which we find here a late echo, as it were, coupled with the complete silence of the church as to the whole question of the grail legend gives good reason for supposing that the church not only did not help the story but even hindered it. What this must have meant for the whole development of the legend we can easily see when we examine certain internal features of the account of the holy grail in its original form. The grail was supposed to give him who was in its presence every thing <u>needed</u> for happiness. Purity of the highest order was at first considered as indispensible. But the idea of its unlimited power of supply always loomed up large in all versions. It was a very easy ans psychologically natural

1) "Englische Literatur", Bernhard ten Brink, p. 316.

step in the minds of men not exceptional for their purity of morals to pass from the conception of a vessel which supplied everything needed to one which supplied everything wanted,- a distinction sharply defined. How much easier such a transition could be under the frown of the church is easy to understand. No clergy stood ready to rebuke such a profanation of the sacred relic, and so from seed within itself, watered by the proclivities of sensually-minded men the legend of a wonderful, need-supplying vessel was distorted into a mere wish-supplying vessel. At last the very name became, from the Tirol to the North Sea, a synonym for things which in the original legend no man could even think of and dwell in its presence.

With this much attention to the origin and development of the grail legend it becomes necessary to show in what way it is related to the Venusberg. As showing the general trend of my argument I give a quotation from Johann Fischart. In his Gargantua, edition of 1594, the following words occur on page 221b: "den Grall oder Venusberg besuchen." The place is here assumed to be in Italy. The two names seem to be synonymous. Why? We pass first to a consideration of the Venusberg legend itself.

THE VENUSBERG.

The Venusberg first appears in literature under this name in the year 1357 in a Dutch poem entitled "Die Kinder von Limburg" [1] or "Margarete von Limburg". The date of its first appearance as well as the place is significant. It is after the last of the crusades by somewhat better than a century. It is, furthermore, at the north-western extremity of Germany. At first thought we are led to wonder why such an idea as a mountain of Venus had not earlier presented itself if it were to become current at all. The history of such places as the shrines of Venus on Mt. Eryx and in Cyprus as well as at other points in and about the Mediterranean would seem to have afforded abundant inspiration for such a myth centuries before. It must, however, be remembered that learning was very scanty among the people during these centuries preceding the renaissance, and that there was,therefore, but small chance for tales of life on Mt. Eryx and in Cyprus or similar places to the south and east to become generally known, although Venus and her general characteristics were fairly familiar. And we must remember that the myth of the Venusberg was not merely the creation of the learned few but a true folk-myth.

At any rate the fact remains that the name Venusberg first appears in literature about the middle of the 14th century. From then on it is a frequent subject for literary comment, by which we know that the notion was gaining ground everywhere among the people of Germany.

"Das deutsche Heldenbuch" in 1452 mentions the trusty Eckart

1) Konversationslexikon, Brockaus, under 'Venusberg'.

who sits before Fraw Venusperg. 1) Faber in his Evagatorium (1483) mentions the place by name and thinks the one in Italy is named after the one in Cyprus. 2) In 1486 Bernhardt von Brettenbach in his "Reise gein Jerusalem" speaks of a Venusberg and grotto in Cyprus in an attempt to refute those who claim it is in Italy. 3) A patrician of Cologne gives a lengthy account of his expedition to vrauw Venus berch on a trip from Rome to Venice (1497). 4) Hermann von Sachsenheim in his poem "Die Mörin" (1512) tells us of his forced visit to Frau Venusberg somewhere in the orient. 5) In the same year (1512) Murner in his "Narrenbeschwörung", 6, V. 51 ff., tells of a traveling scholar who is a cavalier from Frau Venus Berg. Hans Sachs in his voluminous writings makes mention several times of the Venusberg. (1545 - 1559). 6) In one place he speaks of a young doctor of Florence who is told by two painters about Frau Venusberg. Again in his well-known "Fahrender Schüler im Paradies" he says, "Ich bin in Venusberg gewesen, Da hab' ich gsehen manchen buler". In his Schwanckbücher he mentions a traveling scholar from Venusberg; again he refers to it in the "Unsichtige nacket hausmagt", and in "Der Pawrenknecht mit der Nebelkappen" Martin Montanus in his Schwanckbuch (1557 - 1566) tells of "einem pfaffen, maier, seinem weib und farenden schüler." The traveling scholar says he has been in Fraw Venusberg. The farmer asks how it is there and if Tannhäuser is still there. 7) In the Zimmer-

1)"Das deutsche Heldenbuch", Stutt. Coll., v. 87, p. 3.
2)Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Stutt. Coll., v. 4, p.221 ff
3)cf. "Bunte Blätter", Friedrich Kluge, 'Venusberg', p. 34.
4)Same, pp. 35, 36. 5) "Die Mörin", Stutt. Coll., v. 137.
6)Hans Sachs, Stutt. Coll., v.201, p. 319; v. 125, pp. , ,
7) Martin Montanus, "Schwanckbücher", Stutt. Coll., v. 217, p. 396.

ische Chronik (1564 - 1566) we find the French court referred to as Veneris Berg. The court of Herzogin von Österreich is called the same. A citizen of Mosskirch, Petter Schneider by name, says that he has often been in the Venusberg. A reference is also made to the inquiry of Aeneas Silvias of his brother in Italy as to where the Venusberg is. The fact is also mentioned that traveling scholars often come from the Venusberg. 1) Hans Sachs in 1567 gives us a Fastnachspiel entitled "Das Hofgesindt Veneris". In 1588 Johann Fischart in his "Erneuerte Beschreibung vom Peter von Staufenberg" mentions the Venusberg along with Tannhäuser, Sachsenheim, and Eckart. The famous Theophrastus Paracelsus in volume IX, 345 speaks also of Venusberg (1588). In the 1594 edition of his "Gargantua" Fischart mentions "den Grall oder Venusberg besuchen". 2) Del Rio in his Disquis. Magic. (I, 674) refers to the place by its name of Venusberg (1606). Goedeke's Grundriss makes mention under date of 1614 of an account of Venusberg by Henricum Kormannum. "Mons Veneris. Fraw Veneris Berg. Das ist Wunderbare und eigentliche Beschreibung des alten Haydnischen und Newen Scribenten Meynung, von der Göttin Venere - - durch Henricum Kornmannum ex Kirchjana Chattorum." 3) Frőlich in the "Viatorum", II, 114. (1644) says, "In apennino monte Marchiae Anconiae in Italia immane horribileque est antrum quod Sibyllae caverna vel Mons Veneris vulgo dicitur, de quo superstitiosi multa fabulosa recitare solent." Sigismund von Birken (1669) in "Brandenburgischer Ulysses", page 149, says, "Noch eine solche Sibyllen-Hölle ist zu finden auf dem Gebirge Apenni unfern von dem Castel S. Maria in Gallo welche den Anwohnern der Venus Berg genennt und viel Dings davon

1) Neudrücke d. Lit., v. 9.2)bl. 221 b 3) p. 585, # 22.

gefabelt wird." In the last edition of "Promptuarium Germanico-Latinum", by a Jesuit, Wolfgang Schönleder, (1688) is to be found on the last page of next to the last leaf (LII 3a Spalte 2) the gloss: "Venusberg Fiscellus mons unde Nar. fl. oritur. Mons Sibyllae vulgo." Thus, as Friedrich Kluge remarks in his paper on the Venusberg, the myth gradually dies away in the 17th century.1) This enumeration by no means exhausts the instances which a careful search of all the literature of the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th centuries would doubtless reveal.

A study of the references shows the interesting fact that in two-thirds of the instances cited there is not the slightest attempt to localize this Venusberg nor does it seem to be assumed that its location is a well-known fact. In the cases where attempts are made to localize the myth we feel that it is mere caprice and not definite fact which lies back of it. Various mountains in Germany, it is true, have been regarded as Venusberge. 2) In Schwabia, Thuringia, Meiningen, Vorarlberg mountains have been given this name. Likewise have mountains in Italy and Cyprus been so called. But it is our intention to show that these localizations are matters of local tradition or else learned theorizing based largely on such tradition. The very diversity of these late attempts by local historians and scholars to locate the Venusberg is very strong evidence that the beginnings of the myth are to be sought elsewhere than in some purely local tradition. It indicates that the legend is, furthermore, one of those folk-myths covering a wide area of country and here and there becoming localized where

1) "Bunte Blätter", Venusb., p. 60
2) cf. "Tannhäuser und Ewige Jude", Grässe, p. 16 ff.

circumstances make it easy. A word of Kluge's anent this point is interesting. He says, "In the old legend the Hörselberg is nowhere the seat of Frau Venus, it is assigned to her as a residence only in the 19th century. In the older time the realm of the legend was the Venusberg and only the Venusberg." 1)

An account of the attempts to locate the Venusberg in Germany is given by Grässe in a pamphlet of the '60's. 2) In his discussion, however, he does not commit himself as to its location although he mentions various mountains about which the myth clung, chiefly the Hörselberg in Thuringia.

A more serious attempt to localize the story finds expression in the paper by Kluge. He is indebted for the idea which he holds to the famous French scholar, Gaston Paris. 3) In his paper he defends at some length and with much detail the proposition that the myth of the Venusberg had its origin about a mountain near Norcia in northern Italy and that thence it spread northward to Germany. He cites many references to the name Venusberg, and by them attempts to establish his point. His authorities, however, when grouped into the two periods into which they are seen, upon a little examination , naturally to fall, present evidence which, if not what Kluge intended, is at least interesting. He opens his argument by stating that between 1450 and 1550 the name Venusberg often occurs in literature. In the century preceding, the 14th, he tells us a monk, Pierre Bersuire (died about 1362*), speaks of a mountain in the Apennines where magic is taught, but

1) "Bunte Blätter", Venusb., p. 29.
2) "Tannhäuser und Ewige Jude", Grässe, p. 13 ff.
3) "Bunte Blätter", Venusb., p. 28, note.

does not connect it with the name of Venus. Another, Facio degli Uberti (died about 1367) in a work called "Dittamondo" 1) describes a mountain of Pilatus and a lake of demons. He obviously means Monte de Pilato near Norcia, as a commentator on his work tells us. But he says no word of Venusberg. The preacher Bernardino Bernavoglia in Foligno, a little town near Spoleto, he cites in a sermon in which he says, "Ad hunc lacum conveniunt homines de propinquis et remotis partibus et faciunt ibi aras cum tribus circulis et ponentes se cum oblatione in tertio circulo, vocant daemonem nomine quem volunt, legendo librum consecrandum diabolo. Qui veniens cum magno strepitu et clamore dicit: 'cur me quaeris?' Respondet: 'volo hunc librum consecrare, id est volo, ut tenearis facere omnia quae in ipso scripta sunt, quoties te invocavero, et pro labore tuo dabo animam meam.' Et sic firmato pacto accipit librum diabolus et designat in eo quosdam characteres, et deinceps legendo librum diabolus promptus est ad omnia mala faciendum." 2) Here too, although a clear enough reference to a magic mountain is made, there is nothing of the Venusberg. Even Antonius de la Sale in his "Salat" (1450*) says nothing of the mons Veneris in his account of this mountain near Norcia. 3) From this date on begins the second period in Kluge's chronology, a period extending to the end of the 17th century, during which continued reference is made to this mountain in Norcia as a Venusberg. All those of the earlier period, the 14th and early 15th centuries merely describe a

1) "Bunte Blätter", Venusb., p. 32.
2) Same, pp. 32, 33.
3)Same, pp. 37 - 38.

mountain of the black art in Italy; they do not name it. That the myth in connection with this mountain of the Sibyl in Italy is of later origin is indicated, furthermore, by a passage from Faber where he says, writing about 1490*, "Et moderno tempore vulgus rudis delirat de quodam Tusciae monte, non longe a Roma, in quo dicunt dominam Venerem - - - Et haec aevo nostro contigerunt." 1)

He speaks of "moderno tempore" and uses the present tense of his verb, which shows that he has in mind some occurrences not very far back. And yet, in North Germany, in 1357, occurs mention of a Venusberg by that name. It is strange,to say the least, that a thing which started in Italy should be first mentioned at the other extreme of Germany.

Added to this chronological evidence against Kluge's position is the fact that Germans play such a role in the whole question. Tannhäuser, a German, is the leading character bound up with the whole myth. A little farther on in the same passage quoted above from Faber he goes on to say: "Unde de hoc carmen confictum habetur, quod manifeste a vulgo per Alemanniam canitur de quodam nobili Suevo, quem nominant Danhuser, de Danhusen villa prope Dunckelspuchel." Witness what Dietrich a Niem says as far back as 1410 when he speaks of Germans who are seeking the mountain called 'der Gral', which has, from his description, all the characteristics of the Venusberg; and the German Fischart's reference to seeking the 'Grall oder Venusberg'. Faber continues along this line still farther in the same passage; "In tantum autem hac fama dementati sunt Alemanni, ut multi simplices ad hos famatos peregrinentur

1) Faber, "Evagatorium", Stutt. Coll., v. 4, p. 221.

montes, et dum contigit aliquem mori, amici sui famant, eum raptum a Venere in montem; alii redeuntes dicunt se vidisse, quae phantasticis auditu didicerunt." Here are Kluge's own words on this phase of the question:

"Deutsche Reisende haben bei ihren Besuchen auf dem sagenberuhmten Monte della Sibilla die deutsche Tannhäusersage dorthin getragen. Und bei den wiederholten Nachforschungen, die Deutsche dort anstellten, bürgerte sich allmählich, wenn auch vorübergehend unsere Tannhäusersage dort ein. Was la Sale dort in Mai 1420 erzählen hörte, war die deutsche Sage wie sie ja auch von einem deutschen Ritter handelt.

"In der Tat sind die Deutschen am Ausgang des Mittelalters zu meist interessiert für den Monte della Sibilla. In der Eingangsgrotte zum unterirdischen Reich der Sibylle kopierte der sorgfältigste Geograph des Sagenberges, la Sale, die Inschrift, 'Her Hans Wanbanbourg Borg intravit', also ein deutscher Ritter hatte sich hier verewigt. In Montemonaco hörte derselbe la Sale von zwei Deutschen, die mit dem Geistlichen Antonio Fumato die Grotte besucht haben. Um die gleiche Zeit soll nach dem Züricher Chorherrn Hemmerlin in seinem um 1450 geschriebenen, aber erst 1497 gedruckten Dialogus 'de Nobilitate (Bl. 94a) ein Schwyzer nahe bei Norcia und dem Kastell Montefortino den Sibyllenberg besucht und daselbst mit schönen weiblichen Geistern sich aufgehalten haben. Ungefähr um dieselbe Zeit, in die der Kölner Arnold v. Harff seinen allerdings mehr als problematischen Besuch des Venusbergs verlegt, berichtet das Evagatorium des Ulmer Bruders Felix Fabri, der in den 80er Jahren des 15. Jahrhunderts zweimal zum gelobten

Lande pilgerte, bei Gelegenheit der Insel Cypern und der daselbst lokalisierten Venusverehrung auch von dem Venusberg auf dem Apennin, unweit von Rom; er verknüpft das Tannhäuserlied damit und weiss auch davon zu berichten, dass es gerade Deutsche sind, die es dorthin zieht: (then follows the quotation given above, 'In tantum autem hac fama etc.).

"Und vom Venusberg unserer fahrenden Schuler wissen auch die romanischen Quellen, dass es in erster Linie Deutsche sind, deutsche Schwarzkünstler, die ihn zu ihrem Reiseziel machen." 1)

Antonius de la Sale in his account of the mountain in Italy makes the astounding statement that it is a German knight who enters this kingdom or paradise of the Sibyl and that the queen greets him in native German. 2) Surely the thing has something fundamentally German in it or else Germans have an affection for this love grotto and magic mountain greater than the Italians by whom, or at least in whose midst, it is said to have been conceived.

It will be seen, furthermore, that the spirit of this mountain of the Sibyl in Italy is of a two-fold nature, a mountain of love and a mountain of magic, the former element seeming to become connected with it at a later date than the latter. Kluge points out that there are two neighboring peaks and that the myth of the Sibyl and her magic clung to one while that of Frau Venus became attached to the other. His attempt to reconcile either his myth to the topography or the topography to the myth would seem to be unnecessary when we recall that the Hörselberg in Ger-

1) "Bunte Blätter", Venusb., p. 56 ff. 2) Same, p. 40.

many was not only the seat of Frau Venus according to the tradition but also a mountain of magic. In fact there is no feature of the legend, either as regards love or magic art, which has not its prototype in Germany.

From such evidence it is much safer to conclude that the myth is primarily of German origin; that thence it traveled south into Italy in the 15th century when the German mind was reaching out in its attempt to locate the place and the revival of classical learning suggested a classical residence for Venus. The activity of the Germans in the search shows that the whole story had become for them a familiar one at home. That they searched so diligently attests further that the myth had no definite local origin, wherefore it became possible to attach it to many different mountains, most conspicuous among them, because of the revival of classical interest, the mountain in the south country which, through a certain mystery clinging about it from an earlier day made it an appropriate point to fix upon.

ARTHUR.

One of the most important links connecting the grail legend with the Venusberg is to be found in the history of the story of King Arthur and his knights. From a date shortly after the close of the crusades we find various indications of a change in conception as to the character of this famous hero and his table round. So far as has been observed this change is confined to Germany. To those acquainted only with the traditional accounts of Arthur the claim of such a deterioration as will here be brought into the foreground must come as quite as great a surprise as the similar deterioration in the grail legend itself. And, indeed, we hope to show that the two went hand in hand in their downward course for the very reason that they were so closely associated in the popular mind. This change from the high and lofty to the low and debased in the instance of the Arthur legend seems to have compassed the whole gamut of human morals with surprising readiness and speed. Down to the 13th century all we hear of Arthur is good. He is the very embodiment of manly purity and virtue. Like the grail legend, however, this story of Arthur from about the middle of the 13th century takes a turn at once bizarre and unexpected.

Let us briefly trace the course of the entire legend. Our first mention of Arthur is in Nennius' history, dating about 800* 1). The account tells us of twelve battles between the Britons and the Saxons in which the former were successful. Chief among these battles is one at Mount Badon. In all the Britons were un-

1) "The Arthur of the English Poets", Howard Maynadier, p. 23 ff.

der the leadership of a general ("dux bellorum") named Arthur. In the eighth battle it is told of him,- "and in this battle Arthur carried upon his shoulders the image of the Holy Virgin Mary, and the pagans were put to flight on that day, and there was a great slaughter of them through the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the favor of his Holy Mother Saint Mary." At Mount Badon the account tells "where there fell by Arthur's own hand in one day nine hundred and sixty of the heathen." Later in the work Nennius tells of certain Mirabilia ascribed to Arthur. One is of the stone in which Arthur's dog left his footprint; another of the grave of Arthur's son Anir, which varies in length as different ones measure it. And Nennius naively adds, "et ego --- probavi." The title of Nennius'work is Historia Britonum. The account is rather scanty as compared with some which come later, but marks the beginning of literary mention of Arthur.

Following Nennius comes one Geoffrey of Monmouth. 1) As Doctor Maynadier points our, Geoffrey came at a time when the story of Arthur had assumed much larger and more magnificent proportions It is no mere historical account, but a grotesquely amplified legend. His book bears the title of a History of the Kings of Britain. (1137*) The chief interest of the work for us in the present discussion lies in the fact that it gives us literary evidence of the rapidly developing mass of legend which was growing up about Arthur. Geoffrey probably did not invent all of the various additions which he gives to the simple account of Nennius but rather picked them up from the body of folk-lore about him.

1) The Arthur of the English Poets, p. 35.

The account was taken seriously neither by contemporaries nor by later centuries.

A Norman by the name of Wace came next in point of time after Geoffrey of Monmouth. 1) In translating Geoffrey's history into Norman-French he considerably enlivened and amplified it. His description of Arthur's court life and of the origin and purpose of the Table Round is of interest. His work dates in the year 1155.

After Wace came Layamon, an Englishman, who gave an English translation of Wace's Roman de Brut (1205). 2) In his account Arthur is spoken of as an English king, rather than a Briton, showing that by this time the tradition of enmity between Saxon and Briton had largely died out. His account of the Round Table is much more detailed than that of Wace. But for us his chief interest lies in an addition which tells of Arthur's proposed retirement to Avalon after his death as well as somewhat of the nature of the place and of his reception. 3) It runs as follows: (I use Doctor Maynadier's modern rendering) "And I myself will go to Avalon, to the most beauteous of women, to the queen Argante, an elf wondrous fair: and she will heal me of my wounds, and make me quite well with a healing drink. Afterwards I will come again to my kingdom, and dwell among the Britons in great bliss.' While he was saying this, a little boat came, borne by the waves. There were two women therein, of marvellous beauty. They took Arthur

1)The Arthur of the English Poets, p. 50 ff.
2)Same, p. 52 ff.
3)Same, p. 57 ff.

and laid him in the boat, and sailed away. - - - And the Britons believe yet that he is alive, and dwells in Avalon with the fairest of elves; and the Britons still look for his coming again." As Doctor Maynadier comments, "We see here that the passing of Arthur has taken its first step towards the mystic poetry of Malory and Tennyson." In view of later developments this account of Layamon's is an interesting bit of mysticism.

During the time that these later English pseudo-chroniclers were at work with the Arthurian legend, certain French writers were none the less active. Chief among these were Robert de Boron and Chrestien de Troyes. Robert de Boron in about the year 1200 wrote a long prose romance on the grail. Other stories treating of Arthur are credited to him, chief among them the "Merlin".

Chrestien de Troyes in point of time dates a little before Robert de Boron. In his "Le conte du Graal" he gives us our first mention of the grail and for the first time in literature links it with the legend of Arthur. His work stands as one of the great classics in this field. Thus far the conception of Arthur has grown more and more glorious.

In Germany the first and greatest writer who touches upon this theme is Wolfram von Eschenbach. In his Parzival he gives an account of the grail and its quest which stands as one of the monuments of all German literature. As has been pointed out in the chapter on the Grail, his account is a lofty one, both with reference to the grail and the Table Round. But following Wolfram by a very few years comes a writer who hints, at least, at other things. Heinrich von dem Türlein in "Diu Crone" (1220) gives a

long account of Arthur and his knights and the grail quest.1) Obviously he has copied largely from his predecessors. But one cannot help being impressed with the fact that here is a slightly different tone from what is to be found in the earlier works mentioned. The knights of the Round Table become involved in escapades at times of a very doubtful character. It is true that Arthur himself is not so represented, but a beginning is, I believe, to be noted here, particulary in view of what in a very few years follows.

About 1250* there appeared in Germany a remarkable poem, entitled "Der Wartburgkrieg". 2) Its authorship is unknown. The work is divided into two independent portions. In the second portion singers of fame are represented in a contest of song, alternately proposing and answering riddles. The subject matter seems to be drawn largely from traditions and legends supposedly well-known to the hearers, as in the Wunsch- und Wettlieder. Hence the poem is of unusual interest to such as are concerned with this period. In sections 82 to 90 occurs the following:

Ein küninc was in Ankulis,
kanstu mir des gaten vinden, meister wîs,
der sîne gâbe ot im gelîche schicke?

Sînen vürsten gab er wê;
selbe muoste er einen visch in sîme sê
erwerben: den gevienc er doch mit schricke.

1) "Diu Crone", von Heinrich von dem Türlein, Stutt. Coll., v. 27.
2) "Der Wartburgkrieg", ed., Karl Simrock, 1858.

Dô het er einen ambetman, der künine, in hôhem prîse,
den visch nam er im mit gewalt:
ob du vür alle meister pfaffen sîs gezalt,
Klinsôr, sô soltu michs ze verte wîse.

83.

Feliciâ, Sibillen kint,
und Jûnô, die mit Artûs in dem berge sint,
die habent vleisch sam wir und ouch gebeine.

Die vrâgt ich wie der küninc lebe,
Artûs, und wer der massenîe spîse gebe,
wer ir dâ pflege mit dem tranke reine,

Harnasch, kleider unde ros? si lebent noch in vreche.
die gottin bringe her vür dich,
daz si dich berihte sam si tete mich,
daz dir iht hôher meister kunst gebreche.

84.

Feliciâ ist noch ein maget,
bî derselben wirde hât si mir gesaget,
dazs einen abbet in dem berge saehe,

des namen hât si mir genant;
taete ich iu sam, er waere iu allen wol bekant:
der schreip mit sîner hant vil gar die spaehe

Wie Artûs in dem berge lebe und sîne helde maere,
der si mir hundert hât genant,
die er mit im vuorte von Britanien lant,
die sint dekeinem vilân sagebaere.

85.

Artûs hât kempfen ûz gesant,
sît er von diser welte schiet, in Kristen lant.
Hôrt, wie die selben botschaft eine glocke

Wol über tûsent raste warp,
dâ von ein hôher grêve sît in kampfe starp.
hôrt, ob sîn übermuot zuo valsche in locke.

Hôrt, wie ez umbe die glocke stât: Artûses
klingesaere,
die muosten lân ir künste schal,
diu selbe glocke in allen durch ôren hal.
des wart diu massenîe an freuden laere.

86.

Sibillen kint Feliciâ
und Jûnô, die sint beide mit Artûse dâ:
daz hât mir Sante Brandan wol bediutet.

Der Klinsôr tuot uns niht bekant
wer sî der kempfe, den Artûs hete ûz gesant;
ern saget ouch niender wer die glocken liutet.

87.

Der Dűrengen fürste sunder haz
sprach: wilt uns diu maere kűnden fürbaz?
wir mûezen nâch den frowen allen senden.

Kanst uns mit singen tuon bekant,
Wie Loherangrîn von Artûs wart ûz gesant,
Dâ von liez wir uns alle noete wenden;

A study of these references brings us face to face with a number of engrossing questions. In the first place, who is this King in Ankulis? What is the mountain in which Arthur is living? How and why did he come there? What sort of life is going on here? What sustains this luxurious court?

Section 82 seems, after some scrutiny, to yield up the secret that it is the Fisher King who is meant. Perhaps Arthur is here intended to be that mythical personage. Ankulis, there is little doubt, means England. The references to the fish, the woe, and the torture in catching the fish all seem to be mystical allusions to that episode which is usually connected with Anfortas. The remainder of the passage seems quite obscure.

The general character of the mountain where Arthur is here said to dwell is obvious enough. He is here with Felicia and Juno. Juno bears a reputation by no means spotless, according to classical mythology. Felicia is a somewhat obscure personage. Her name would indicate that she is perhaps the embodiment of good fortune and bliss. She is child of the Sibyl. Our poet hastens

to tell us that, "Felicia bleibt noch ein magt." Why? It would appear that he is either designing to forestall a misconception as to Felicia's character or that of Arthur. The statement follows so closely after the initial line in which Arthur is said to dwell here as to make it probable that the writer feels it necessary to say specifically that Felicia is still a maid, because of what he knows of the general notion of Arthur's and Felicia's characters held by those about him. The account has a sober enough tone, otherwise we might read into the statement a desire on the poet's part to perpetrate a bit of quiet humor. The general impression is of a place of sensual enjoyment, a sort of love grotto or hollow mountain of bad repute. Felicia seems to be the same as Frau Saelde, as Simrock points out, 1) or as Frau Glück. Heinrich von dem Türlein in his "Diu Crone" speaks of Frau Saelde as living on a high mountain in a beautiful castle and of having relations with Arthur. 2) He furthermore mentions all in one breath Frau Saelde and Frau Minne. 3) All this suggests strongly a sort of Venusberg. Here not only Arthur but all his Table Round seem to be living.

How Arthur got into such a place becomes a matter of interest In the legend of Arthur as given by Layamon we have already seen how he is carried away to a place called Avalon, where dwell beautiful women. May not this be the germ from which such a notion as this Wartburgkrieg account sprang? Here, too, we find Lohengrin; mention is made of the fact that he has been sent out of the mountain by Arthur. Now Lohengrin is one of the chief

1)"Wartburgkrieg", Simrock, p. 348 2)"Crone", ll. 15660 ff.;413ff.
3)"Crone", ll. 17217 ff.

knights directly connected with the grail-quest. Furthermore the poet asks how all this court is fed and clothed and otherwise provided for, leaving his question unanswered. The notion of unlimited supply here suggested is a plain reference to the grail. Arthur is the grail king in this account. And the bell! Is it not the bell of the Gralburg? The bell which the knights of the grail in Parzival hear ringing far off on Munsalvaesch? 1) Truly a mysterious bell and mentioned two times in the account as though a thing of importance in the riddle. Lohengrin is, moreover, mentioned as sent out by Arthur from this place. Simrock concludes that he is sent out for Friedrich von Telramund, as in the account in Parzival, and that he is the 'ambetmann' referred to in section 83, against whom Lohengrin is sent out by Arthur to relieve Elsa von Brabant. 2)

We conclude, therefore, that the place is a confusion of Venus- and Gralberg, that the first is indicated by the presence of Felicia and Juno; the second, by the miraculous provision of food and raiment, the mysterious bell, and the presence of Lohengrin, as well as the obvious reference to the Fisher King.

The question arises, is there any further literary evidence to support the notion that this description in the Wartburgkrieg is not purely a fanciful composition of the poet. In 1280 in the Magdeburg Schöppenchronik we find side by side with the account of the notorious Gralspiel mention of <u>similar</u> games, among them one of the <u>Table Round</u>. The Chronik is as follows: "In these times there were knights who were children of the richest citizens; they

1) cf. The Arthur of the English Poets, p. 150.
2) "Der Wartburgkrieg", Simrock, p. 348.

practised games at Whitsuntide, such as the Roland, Tree of Shields, Table Round and other games which only wise men might comprehend." 1) In a manuscript published for the first time by Caspar Abel and dating about 1490* we are told that the writer thinks the Schwanritter has come out from the mountain where Venus is in the Gral. 2) Fischart in his "Erneuerte Beschreibung von Peter von Staufenberg" gives in lines 53 - 57 the following, "Oder aus Artus Messenei So die Tafelrund bsetzen frei? Oder wollen wir wecken auff Inn Venusberg den schläffrigen Hauf?" Almost in the same breath he speaks of Arthur, Round Table, and Venusberg. An interesting bit of evidence.

The Meisterlieder der Kolmarer Hs. (1589 - 91) contain the following references to Arthur. "Artûs in scham von wîben kam" (Nr. 15); "swaz Artûs irgen frouwen het, daz ist ein wint." (Nr. 49); "Doch Artûs muoste liden scham von wîben, sehent ob daz niht wunder waere."(Nr. 81) The mention of women in the plural and of shame which came to Arthur is likewise suggestive. 3)

There seems, therefore, to be little room to doubt that Arthur had become,in Germany at least,a type of man quite different from what English writers would have us believe him to have been. The explanation of this condition is apparently to be sought, as has already been indicated, in his close connection with the grail legend and his consequent parallel fate with it in its downward course. In a long German romance of about 1280* 4) Arthur him-

1) "Das Höfische Leben", Schultz, 2d Ed., v. 2, p. 117 ff.
2) "Parzival", Hertz, p. 466.
3) "Meisterlieder der Kolmarer Hs.", Stutt. Coll., v. 68.
4) Paul's Grundriss, ii, i, 292.

self is represented as Lord of the Grail Castle and in all accounts some of his knights are concerned in the search for it, now Gawain, now Galahad, now Parzival or Lancelot or Lohengrin. The swan-knight had, furthermore, suffered a similar degradation to that of Arthur. On this point Hertz has the following to say in the notes to his Parzival: "Mehr und mehr wurde der Schwanritter, selbst in seiner niederrheinischen Heimat, mit misstrauischen Augen betrachtet; man spürte ihm instinktiv seine heidnische Herkunft an, und mit ihm erschien auch der Gral in unheimlichem dämonischem Lichte. Lohengrin wandelte auf des Tannhäusers Pfaden. So schreibt der holländische Chronist Veldenaer gegen Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts: Einige Chroniken sagen, der Schwanritter sei aus dem Grale (dat grael) gekommen wie früher das Paradies auf Erden geheissen habe. Aber das ist das heilige Paradies nicht, sondern es ist ein sündiger Ort, wo man durch grosses Abenteuer hineinkommt und durch grosses Abenteuer und Glück wieder heraus." 1)

Dietrich a Niem's description may again be brought in at this point. Certain deluded Germans, says he, are seeking a mountain which they call the grail, where they say are men living a life of sensual indulgence to the crack of doom. May not these men in all probability include in the minds of these seekers Arthur and his knights of the Table Round? The fact that it is the grail which they are seeking makes such an assumption seem reasonable.

With the metamorphosis of the grail legend Arthur and his knights were dragged along. The facts which have been brought to bear in this chapter go to establish the connection of Arthur with

1) "Parzival", Hertz, p. 465.

a place bearing all the hallmarks of a Venusberg of later years. His connection with the grail is already well-known. The situation would indicate, therefore, in another quarter the relationship between grail and Venusberg.

CONCLUSION.

The three chapters on Grail, Venusberg and Arthur may be connected in a very few words. The whole history dates from the time of the crusades, 1095 - 1348. It was during these centuries that crusaders brought back from the Byzantine Mass the legend of the Holy Grail. It was first in these years (1150) 1) that Arthur and the grail legend were connected. Before the close of the 13th century the grail legend had spread over France and Germany. Although the subject for the most lofty literary productions, it suffered degradation at the hands of the people, especially in northern Germany until the name of the cup, transferred by an easy and natural process of metonymy to the castle where the cup was supposed to repose, came to mean a sort of sinful paradise out of which the Arthurian hero Lohengrin was said to come. With the legend of the grail in its downward course went the legend of Arthur in the popular mind. The name Venusberg comes in a century later after this deterioration had become firmly fixed. It is in North Germany also that this idea seems to get its first hold. The legend of such a mountain answers so closely to the mountain called der Gral, described by Dietrich a Niem, to the mountain of the Wartburgkrieg account, where Felicia and Juno dwell with Arthur, and is so confused by Fischart when he speaks of seeking den Grall oder Venusberg that we feel sure of a connection between them. Add to this what the chronicler quoted by Caspar Abel says that Lohengrin comes out of the mountain where Venus dwells in the Gral and we have conclusive evidence that the two, the Gral and the Venusberg, are the same. The chronology

1) Konversationslexikon, Meyers, under 'Artus'.

shows, furthermore, that the grail is first in point of time and is therefore the starting of the Venusberg legend.

To sum up. In point of time the grail legend is first to enter. About a century later we first meet the name Venusberg. During this time we find ample proof that the conception of the grail has greatly changed for the worse in Germany. In Germany, we are forced to conclude, the Venusberg began. In Dietrich a Niem's account we see indications of the idea of Venusberg in connection with the Grail. In Fischart we find expressed an actual confusion of the two names and ideas. And,most important of all, in the Wartburgkrieg and Caspar Abel's Chronik we find Arthur, the grail hero, in just such a mountain as the Venusberg was supposed to be, and his knight, Lohengrin, is said to have been sent out from the mountain where Venus sat in the Gral. In North Germany Lohengrin had come to be regarded as a mysterious and suspicious personage and the place from which he came, the Gral, had come to mean a place of evil, a place where as we now see in Abel's Chronik Venus and her pleasures are to be found. We may very fairly conclude ,therefore,that the real relation of Gral and mountain of Venus was expressed by Fischart when he speaks of visiting 'den Grall oder Venusberg.'

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